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BHUSD May Cut Adult Ed To Fund Other Services

The Beverly Hills Adult School is losing money at a time of reduced education funding from the state.

By [Laurie Lande \(/users/laurie-lande/\)](/users/laurie-lande/) | [Email the author \(#\)](#) | March 23, 2011

The Board of Education will consider a bold move Wednesday evening as it discusses ways to bridge a potential shortfall in the 2011-12 budget: drastically cutting funding to the district's adult and alternative education department.

The Beverly Hills Unified School District's [adult education department \(http://bhas.bhusd.org/\)](http://bhas.bhusd.org/) offers a wide variety of daytime and evening classes to the community. But it is losing money.

"Last year we lost about \$100,000 on adult education....[and] this year we are projecting losses of between \$120,000 and \$180,000," Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Alex Cherniss told parents at a PTA Council meeting on Tuesday.

In addition, the district spends about \$540,000 in state education funds to run the program. In prior years, the state mandated that these funds be used specifically for adult education, but a law that came into effect in early 2009 gave school districts the flexibility to keep these funds even if they do not offer adult education classes.

The board members are looking at tapping these funds in order to save teaching jobs.

The \$700,000 being spent on adult education "represents at least eight teachers [salaries]," Board President Lisa Korbato told the PTA Council.

Her comments allude to a [March 11 board vote \(http://beverlyhills.patch.com/articles/bhusd-faces-more-layoffs\)](http://beverlyhills.patch.com/articles/bhusd-faces-more-layoffs) to send potential layoff notices to more than a dozen teachers and school counselors in accordance with a state directive to slash about \$1 million from next year's budget. These "reduction in force" notices represent possible cuts because the district can rescind them if additional funds are found. State law requires that staff be told of potential layoffs by March 15, with actual layoffs by May 15.

At that same board meeting, Vice President Brian Goldberg convinced his colleagues to send a reduction in force notice to Director of Adult Education Pat Escalante to show that administrators were taking potential cuts along with teachers. Since then, he and Korbato have considered downsizing the department in order to free up spending for teacher salaries.

Assistant Superintendent Cherniss will be presenting several options to the board for downsizing the adult education program, he told Patch.

"Other California school districts have reduced adult ed," he said, naming the Irvine Unified School District and the San Jose Unified School District as examples.

I hope that the board members take the brave step of cutting adult services in favor of more funds for K-12 education. Our residents will survive with fewer adult classes, particularly when the Beverly Hills [Recreation and Parks Department \(http://beverlyhills.patch.com/listings/recreation-and-parks-department-3\)](http://beverlyhills.patch.com/listings/recreation-and-parks-department-3) could boost its offerings.

In better economic times, no school district would be cutting adult education services. But when forced to prioritize spending, the emphasis needs to be on educating children—not adults.